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# What Influences What and How Second and Foreign Language Teachers Teach?

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This article discusses certain influences on second and foreign language (S/FL) teachers and their teaching. I take the social contexts of teaching in schools as of primary concern because despite claims that teaching is a profession, its members often operate under conditions of far less autonomy than many of those in more prestigious professions. I go on to consider both the negative and positive aspects of the role of administrations on S/FL teachers and suggest administrative support for teacher development as an important means to improvement. The article also discusses FL teacher education and research in light of various criticisms that have been levelled at it and introduces the additional perspective of critical applied linguistics, which, I argue, may help to rectify some of the problems.

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IN A RECENT INTRODUCTORY SURVEY OF second and foreign language (S/FL)<sup>1</sup> teaching and learning, Freeman and Freeman (1994) address, in a brief, common-sense, but not particularly critical way, the question of what influences the teaching of S/FL teachers. While recognizing that there is much variation in how teachers teach, the Freemans identify the following factors as influences on individual teachers: (a) how teachers were taught themselves, (b) how teachers were trained and the content of that training, (c) teachers' colleagues and the administration, (d) exposure to new ideas, (e) materials available, (f) the type of students, and (g) personal views of learners and learning. This plausible list presents a point of departure for the present discussion of the influences on S/FL teachers' teaching. Freeman and Freeman are not engaged in developing a critique; however, my own experience as

teacher and teacher educator suggests that a critique is desirable. I join many others in both applied linguistics and mainstream education, particularly those engaged in forms of critical pedagogy, who believe that there are grounds for grave concern when we consider the factors influencing S/FL teachers and teaching in many parts of the world.

## THE BASIC SITUATION

I begin by characterizing the situation of the teacher in general, including that of the S/FL teacher. In line with social theory that adopts a position critical of dominant social structures (e.g., Morrow & Torres, 1995), I believe that the employment circumstances of too many teachers are unduly similar to those of individuals working outside the profession, in factories and businesses, and can be described by the term "alienation" (Auerbach, 1991; Crookes, 1993; Gitlin, 1987, *inter alia*). That is to say, there is a psychological separation between teachers as human beings and teachers in their working environment (Geyer, 1980; Schacht, 1970). I

know many S/FL teachers who, although professionally trained and with a professional outlook, are working under conditions in which they cannot maintain professional standards. They are thus unable to derive the kind of satisfaction and opportunities for personal growth that one might expect of "professional" work (and, ultimately, might want to see typify all employment). In many areas of both English as a second language (ESL) and FL education in the U.S., including my own state of Hawai'i, educational systems (not to mention private language schools, literacy programs, etc.) refuse to provide even the basic training (and appropriate remuneration) that teachers need to execute their duties effectively (Auerbach, 1991; Willett & Jeannot, 1993). At least four areas stand out immediately as indicative of this deskilling of professional S/FL teachers.

First, despite the fact that many S/FL teacher preparation programs provide training in program design, the curriculum in many schools is not designed by teachers, but is mandated by higher authority or determined by the need to prepare students for standardized tests. One of the most fundamental tools by which teachers can discharge their responsibilities is thus beyond their control.

Second, in many schools, particularly state schools, two distinguishable functions, education and schooling, are at odds (cf. Beneveniste, 1985; Kanpol, 1992). The history of the U.S. curriculum and instructional methods is quite clear on this point (e.g., Popkewicz, 1987). It is well known that at the beginning of this century, one of the primary responsibilities of the schools was to "Americanize" the vast influx of European immigrants. Although this is no longer an overt goal in the U.S., the pastoral and socializing functions of schools remain intact, and often primary, particularly in countries with ethnolinguistic minorities or immigrant populations but without a pluralist ethos (cf. García, 1992, citing Skutnabb-Kangas, 1990). Within U.S. history, too, we can find some explanation for why certain "foreign" languages (the so-called commonly-taught languages) are taught and others are excluded (those of non-white immigrants, the so-called less commonly taught languages; García, 1992; cf. Walton, 1992).

The strong socializing function of schools is accompanied by a child-minding function, which results in a strong "accountability" of schools and of teachers to their immediate administrators and to political authorities; this in

turn results in heavy reporting demands for tests taken and grades given, as well as day-by-day conformity to a specific page of a text. Consequently, teachers are obliged to spend a great deal of time complying with administrative matters and working with "lowered teacher discretion and increased routinization" (Beneveniste, 1987, p. 9; cf. Kramsch, 1988, citing Krumm, 1985, on the ubiquity of this phenomenon in FL teaching).

Third, teachers are isolated: Edelfelt (1985), drawing on the classic work of Lortie (1975), has referred to the "deafening silence" that characterizes teachers' situations and derives from "their subordinate status, and . . . their isolation within the cellular structure of schooling" (p. 223). Interaction between teachers is often very restricted by physical arrangements, that is, by the very structure of the buildings in which they work. Tight scheduling is another barrier to teacher interaction (Nias, 1987): Administrators simply do not realize or act on teachers' needs for professional development through professional conversations. Even lesson preparation is sometimes excluded as part of a teacher's paid professional responsibilities. Elementary teachers in the U.S. often do not have preparation periods (Gitlin, 1987), and part-time S/FL teachers (a mainstay of programs at all levels) certainly do not get paid for that part of their responsibilities, with regrettably predictable effects on program quality. Full-time S/FL teachers may have preparation periods, but teacher interaction regarding professional matters usually occurs during personal time or the little time allocated for the essential task of preparation. In addition, due to limited resources, teachers are forced to compete with one another for available resources or, at least, to take measures that inhibit the sharing of both resources and knowledge.

Fourth, it hardly needs to be mentioned that in many situations where S/FLs are taught as part of a state education system, the system itself is often severely underfunded; teachers are thus obliged to take second jobs, which limits time for professional development activities. Under these conditions, of course, "teachers set survival . . . at higher priority than pedagogic concerns" (Holliday, 1994, p. 87, citing Woods, 1984, and Hargreaves, 1984). This is not a situation confined to less developed countries. Almost all of the public sector elementary FL instruction in my home state of Hawai'i is conducted by untrained teachers because there are no permanent full-time positions. With re-

cent budgetary cutbacks, the supervisory “resource teachers,” who provided guidance and support to both elementary and secondary teachers, have been eliminated. On the international level, although poorer countries may understandably not invest heavily in state education, it is noteworthy that even in such “rich” countries as Japan and Korea, FL class sizes of 50 are commonplace. The Korean government is presently introducing English instruction into the elementary schools, though few elementary teachers have more than a minimal command of the language and little provision has yet been made for teacher training (“S. Korea ready for primary school,” 1996)! Although it is obvious that major increases in resource allocation could improve many educational programs, it is most unlikely that such increases will materialize; consequently, again as a product of time pressures, large classes, and resource deficiencies, the teacher-student relationship, which should be at the heart of teaching, is threatened and weakened (Gitlin, 1987).

### CURRICULUM, MATERIALS, AND SCHOOL STRUCTURES

One of the Freemans’ (1994) key factors mentioned in the introduction of this article is “materials available.” Other researchers have also advanced arguments (Long & Crookes 1992, 1993; Ruiz 1987) that are deeply critical of existing S/FL curricula and materials. Much of the curricula and materials that are touted as theoretically superior fail to have any basis in recent discoveries about the psychological and social processes of S/FL learning. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that in many parts of state school systems, state or school boards mandate textbooks, and in the U.S., “90 percent of the time teacher instruction follows the text” (Komoski, 1985). This is surely the standard pattern in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts and in much postsecondary FL instruction (Kramsch, 1988; Tedick & Walker, 1994a). Elementary and secondary FL contexts in the U.S., where a language is often an elective, may evade district control of curriculum but are still subject to the time pressures that lead to text-following. Alternatively, in some systems, text selection may be relatively open, but constraint comes from state or national examinations so that, again, teachers have little real control over curriculum.<sup>2</sup> Typically, teachers have no control over other aspects of school structure: Consider, for example, the ubiquity of the 45-

minute period for high school work in the U.S., where “teachers often see as many as 200 students a day” (Gitlin, 1987, p. 109). The effect of this teacher-student ratio on the development of the teacher-student relationship cannot be ignored. Unlike the situation in the U.S., figures as high as this are considered grounds for a grievance by unions to school administrations in Canada.

### ADMINISTRATIONS

Schools are typically hierarchies. Therefore, “teachers find themselves in a responsive mode, reacting to the particular context established by administrators, while at the same time they are competing with one another for the small rewards the principal offers” (Gitlin, 1987, p. 109). Even though they may have sprung from the ranks of teachers, administrators have different responsibilities, interact with different colleagues and peer group members, face different pressures, and have different fears and goals (Hannaway & Sproul, 1978–79, cited in Pitner, 1987; for a slightly different perspective, cf. Pennington, 1983). As noted by Guthrie and Reed (1986), “decisions of the classic bureaucrat will be made in the interests of the organization, while decisions of the idealized professional will reflect the best interests of the client or norms of the profession” (p. 171). At least in private schools, the interests of the organization involve making a profit. Of course, many administrators are former successful classroom teachers, but as Denison and Shelton (1987) observe:

the tradition of promoting classroom practitioners to managerial positions poses its own problems. Promotion relies less on potential to manage than on success as a teacher . . . there is no certainty that a successful teacher will prove effective in school management. Skills relating to the organisation of [students’] learning or classroom management are quite specific. It would be unreasonable to expect teachers who spend several years developing them to evolve simultaneously a range of more managerially useful competencies. (p. 16)

Even if language program administrators are trained for their job (although such training is unlikely if Denison & Shelton’s [1987] “tradition” is still widespread; cf. Smith, 1993, Staczek, 1991, supporting this position in the case of ESL administrators, and Bugliani, 1994b, for postsecondary FL administrators), there is no guarantee that administrative decisions are made rationally. According to one study, at least 60% of an administrator’s day is

spent in brief verbal encounters of a minute or two with individuals while dashing from one meeting to another (Gronn, 1983). Therefore, administrators, like other executives (and indeed ordinary teachers), are prone to settle for whatever "satisfices" ("a course of action that is satisfactory or 'good enough'": Simon, 1957, p. xxv). Tonkin (1987), himself a university administrator with a foreign language background, states, "Most colleges and universities are today engaged in efforts at self-preservation, and most actions by senior administrators can be explained in these terms" (p. 41). According to Pitner (1987), an educational administrator's work patterns are characterized by:

a low degree of self-initiated tasks, many activities of short duration, discontinuity caused by interruptions, the superseding of prior plans by the needs of others in the organization, face-to-face verbal contacts with one other person, variability of tasks, an extensive network of individuals and groups both internal and external to the school districts, a hectic and unpredictable flow of work, numerous inconsequential decisions, few attempts at written communication, events occurring in or near the administrator's office, interactions predominantly with subordinates, and a preference for problems and information that are immediate. (p. 56)

Although understandable, many of these characteristics may lead to decision-making that is not necessarily the most logical.

Now, if we are asking the question "Why do teachers teach the way they do?" with the implication that we are not satisfied with the situation, a central concern with administration must then be "Why don't administrations help teachers change the way they teach?" I have implied that an overarching answer is simply that the administration of S/FL programs is likely to be of a patchy quality. However, there is, I believe, an additional important consideration: Many educational administrations have yet to recognize (or act upon) their responsibilities for promoting change in the way teachers teach, in the sense of promoting increased teacher expertise and insight. Goodlad's (1984) work testifies to the long-term static nature of classroom instruction in the U.S.; he also documents the fact that principals normally visit teachers only once or twice a year, and, on those rare occasions, the feedback is vitiated by its evaluative tone. That is to say, the potential for change provided by the feedback loop that administrations might, *prima facie*, be expected to constitute, is often simply nonexistent.

Furthermore, this feedback loop should pass beyond the level of the individual teacher to act as a characteristic of the program as a whole. That is to say, procedures should be in place for a systematic, ongoing evaluation or self-study (Henrichsen, 1994) of any S/FL program. Although accreditation demands perform this function to some extent (e.g., Weir & Roberts, 1994; cf. Brumfit & Coleman, 1995), even accrediting boards are unfortunately capable of focusing on, for example, the physical plant or support services of a program rather than its ability to constitute a learning site for teacher development.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

There has been much discussion (Edelfeldt, 1985; Furtwengler, 1985; Holmes Group, 1986) of the concept of a teacher career ladder. Researchers have observed that by comparison with business or civil service, the concept of the professional advancement of teachers is not clear: A series of steps connected with increased experience, expertise, and financial reward is not obvious. Furthermore, the advancement that does occur often takes teachers out of the classroom and into administration. In state systems in many countries, teachers may advance up a series of salary steps according to years of experience and the accumulation of professional qualifications that are often in the form of university courses related to education. However, unless supported by a serious concern for effects on teaching, experience and university credits may be insufficient indicators of professionalism.

At an administrative level, supervisory review of teaching can be a productive force for teacher development if it is designed in cooperation with teachers so that it is not a punitive or unrealistic system (Hickox & Musella, 1992). It is commonplace for "human resource management" systems, whether business or bureaucracy, to provide for the review of performance and growth of individuals in hierarchically structured systems. In such systems, individuals receive feedback on key areas of job performance and dialogically negotiate goals for areas requiring improvement or the development of knowledge or competence. When applied to teaching, such systems can provide a structured process whereby teachers can identify, focus on, and improve aspects of their professional life. In this system, each person taking part might meet, for example, twice yearly with another professional (peer or senior) to review a con-

tract that was previously drawn up together and that set negotiated goals and objectives for personal and professional growth (Smith, 1976, p. 67). This process, sometimes called "growth contracting," has been in existence for more than twenty years now in the postsecondary sector, yet it is only recently that discussion of such matters has surfaced in language teaching contexts (for ESL, see White, Martin, Stimson, & Hodge, 1991; for FL, see Bugliani, 1994a; Parr, 1993; Terry, 1993).

However, it is essential that administrations implementing such systems provide support for teachers to strive toward such goals. An example of how this may be done is the "Peer Assistance and Review" program, which was instituted during the late 1980s in one U.S. school district (Rochester). In this system, the school district identified about 20 teachers who had demonstrated outstanding teaching ability and released them from all classroom responsibilities so that they could act as mentors to about 150 junior teachers. Rivera (1992) described the program as follows:

They observed the interns at work and offered expert advice on how to improve classroom teaching and student learning. [They] served as a sounding board for ideas, provided emotional support and encouragement, and helped the interns to gain confidence in their teaching abilities [while] redu[cing] teachers' sense of isolation. (pp. 440–41)

A subsequent innovation in this same district was the development, through negotiation with the teachers' union, of the Career in Teaching program (CIT). As part of teacher development, this program was intended to "provide teachers with career options that do not require them to leave the classroom in order to assume additional responsibility and leadership roles . . ." (Rivera, 1992, p. 447).

Such examples provide optimism. However, throughout most of even those countries which have well-developed infrastructures and devote a respectable part of their national budget to education, schools (and language departments) are generally *not* seen as sites of knowledge creation; they are *not* learning organizations (Senge, 1995), and teachers are *not* supported in professional development activities that will truly result in professional development.

#### SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF FL TEACHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

There are marked limitations of teacher preparation curricula and practices in the area

of FL. In my own state of Hawai'i, for example, the situation is quite inadequate: Many teachers who enter FL education in the high schools will have had no more than one or two classes in pedagogy and none in SLA theory or research. However, according to some authorities, higher levels of preparation are not necessarily better. Referring only to the U.S., Tonkin (1987) notes:

Most language teachers have entered the profession through training in departments of language and literature, whose methods and curriculum derive ultimately from the study of the classical languages . . . (p. 29)

One of the greatest handicaps of the language teaching faculties in colleges and universities, at least in the European languages, is the nature of their training . . . As a consequence, students leaving the university with a Ph.D. find that much of their training has little bearing on the classroom instruction in which they spend the greater part of their time. Indeed, their experience of classroom instruction before receipt of the doctorate may well have taken place with relatively little guidance or assistance. (p. 34)

Though the situation may have improved in some areas in the last 10 years, my own experience is that such improvement is not the general rule. I agree with Tedick and Walker's (1994a) recent assessment: "we have failed decade after decade to bring about substantive and lasting national change in the preparation and certification of language teachers" (p. 205, citing Joiner, 1993). Tedick and Walker (1994a) are of the view that "the most exciting foundation on which to base major reform in second language teacher education is the realization that all of second language education should be integrated [so] . . . the preparation for teaching Spanish, German, French, or a less commonly taught language is in many ways similar to the preparation to teach English as a second language" (p. 300; cf. Tedick & Walker, 1994b, 1995). However, even relatively innovative S/FL teacher preparation programs, including ESL programs, usually reflect a more general tendency in education: a technocratic orientation that makes it difficult to provide new teachers with an understanding of their sociohistorical context, of themselves as political actors, and of the idea that the classroom is not a given (cf. Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Willett & Jeannot, 1993). "The professional training of ELT people concentrates on linguistics, psychology and education in a restricted sense. It pays little attention to international relations, development studies, theories of culture or intercultural contact, or

the politics or sociology of language or education" (Phillipson, 1988, p. 348). "Most departments of foreign languages . . . have remained faithful to their academic origins and have given relatively little attention to revolutionary new developments in sociolinguistics or to the whole question of the social and political implications of language" (Tonkin, 1987, p. 34). Consequently, for the FL community, the effects of the dead hand of literature (the "academic origins") upon actual language pedagogy cannot be ignored. Graman (1988) is worth quoting at length on this point.

The main objective of most university foreign language programs is not to foster second language acquisition, but rather to keep the program and teaching assistants uniform and orderly. In effect, the textbooks serve an administrative purpose in a context where the goal of the departments is to promote the study of literature, not language acquisition. Foreign language courses past the first four semesters are strictly for majors in literature (and in some cases linguistics or business). Literary analysis is the only route available for most graduate and upper-division undergraduate students who want to continue foreign language study in the United States. Thus, first-year textbooks are the optimal solution for such lack of interest. They provide vogueish, "teacher-proof" packages for teaching assistants in the foreign language programs and are almost always banking rather than dialogic in nature. (p. 443)

An issue related to the nature of teacher education programs is the relationship of research to teaching and of researchers to teachers. This has been the subject of extensive agonizing in both the FL and ESL sections of applied linguistics for many years, but nevertheless I cannot avoid touching on it briefly here. First, consider the position of Freed (1991; cf. Silber, 1991; Swaffar, 1989; Saporta, 1989), who addresses the problem from a somewhat technical-rational position, which is nevertheless informed by an awareness of power (i.e., critical) issues in (U.S.) FL institutions. She remarks:

the teaching of foreign languages has traditionally been embedded in departments of foreign languages and literatures . . . [which] has meant that . . . language teaching has long been a service function of our departments, while those involved in teaching languages and conducting research on language learning or language teaching have usually remained at the lower end of the academic hierarchy [and] there is an absence of well-trained foreign language researchers [who are in any case] divorced from SLA researchers. (p. 4)

This position, then, is that FL teachers teach

the way they do partly because their work is not informed by more recent information about the nature of S/FL teaching and learning. But we may go further: Valdés (1992) questions the self-limitation of the FL teaching profession in the U.S. to the teaching of incipient bilingualism to monolinguals, and advocates its redefinition to encompass the many bilingual students of heritage languages in the U.S. Valdés remarks:

this new population of students would already be bilingual. What this means is that second language acquisition theories now guiding traditional foreign language instruction would have little to say about these students and what they should be taught. Existing research on incipient or developing bilingualism in foreign and second languages would be of little relevance, and views about (L2) developmental sequences and (L2) proficiency hierarchies would contribute little to the understanding of the instructional needs of this population . . . [T]he foreign language teaching profession would need to be informed, not by theories of second language acquisition, but by an understanding of societal bilingualism and language contact as well as by theories of second dialect learning. (p. 33)

That is to say, Valdés calls for, at the very least, research that is social and contextual where language is concerned. Now it has been suggested that "school structure does not determine how teachers behave. Rather, teacher behaviour reflects a compromise between teacher values, ideology, and the press of school structure" (Gitlin, 1987, p. 107). If this position is accepted, it should be clear that research that denies a role for values is unlikely to inform and improve teacher practice. That is, of course, a standard charge against investigations done in a "positivist" mode. Therefore, the concern of Freed and others like her, though important, should be supplemented with a position that the nonuptake by FL teachers of much of the research produced thus far by mainstream SLA researchers, many more of whom work more with English than with other languages, should not be surprising and, perhaps, is not necessarily a bad thing. According to Pennycook (1990), this kind of research typifies applied linguistics and "entails a continued faith in an apolitical, ahistorical view of language" (p. 10). Because such research never questions the status quo of the political enterprise of language teaching, except on grounds of "efficiency," it thereby continues to prop up what is an inequitable enterprise (cf. Cherryholmes, 1985; Popkewitz, 1981). Thus, what is needed to change how teachers teach is, as some have said, a form of

research that revalues the work of teachers vis-à-vis researchers. Auerbach (1991) suggests:

Since the academy views teachers as less skilled workers and researchers as true professionals, we need to fight for a model that ties professionalism to what happens in the classroom . . . We need to fight for our right to become teacher-intellectuals whose practice also informs the development of theory. (p. 7)

The most well-established change in educational research paradigms in recent years is the shift from quantitative to qualitative approaches. However, this move alone does not alter the individualist nature of such research. Modifications of the traditional research paradigm, which better address Auerbach's (1991) call by requiring new social dimensions in educational research, are teacher-researcher partnerships (e.g., Heath, 1983) and action research. The latter is a conception of research that most immediately places the development of theory in the hands of the practitioner (Crookes, 1993).<sup>3</sup> Both concepts are typically "interpretive qualitative" (Davis, 1995, p. 436) in nature. When they speak directly to the power differential referred to by Auerbach, they embody a committed stance and an emancipatory intent, founded on a search for the way power relations play themselves out in S/FL and the way they are both taught and researched. This viewpoint is often to be found with the label "critical" (e.g., critical ethnography [Simon & Dippo, 1986]; cf. Comstock, 1982; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994) or "participatory" attached (e.g., participatory action research [McTaggart, 1991]), to which I now turn.

#### THE PERSPECTIVE OF CRITICAL APPLIED LINGUISTICS

The comments of Tonkin (1987), Valdés (1992), and Pennycook (1990) in the previous section all hint at a more trenchant analysis of the inadequacies of the "construction" of S/FL teaching. The simple and indisputable position I accepted at the outset of this article, that how teachers are taught and how they are trained has important effects on how they teach, can be seen as resulting from analyses at the individual level, which should be placed in a broader sociohistorical and political context. It is certainly likely that how we operate as teachers will, in the absence of other pressures, be strongly affected by how we were taught as students. Yet it might also be said, more broadly and with a critical tone, that the way teachers teach is in-

fluenced by the effects of the social structures in which they are embedded, which create them, and which they in turn create.<sup>4</sup>

At the most obvious level, schools are instruments for the transmission of culture. Thus, the children of the elite socioeconomic class are to be found in elite schools, a major function of which is the maintenance and transmission of elite ("upper-class") culture (cf. Cookson & Persell, 1985). State systems also work to perpetuate class, race, and gender distinctions (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Ogbu, 1979; Weiler, 1988). This is not always easy to perceive because there is a tendency to see disciplines and the curricula as preexisting, rather than created, at which point "power becomes naturalized in our common sense" (Fendler & Popkewitz, 1993, p. 25). The history of discipline and curriculum construction is not often presented in a thorough fashion in teacher education programs, but it is essential for understanding the current situation. Popkewitz (1987) comments:

Our patterns of language enable us to lose sight of the socially constructed quality of schooling. What is socially constructed are made to seem natural and inevitable elements . . . Yet in using the language of schooling, we forget that learning, teaching and the school subjects have particular social histories. They are practices that do not appear until the latter part of the industrial revolution to guide the tasks of modern schooling. The creation of the new school subjects [in the U.S.] focused the activities of schooling on bourgeois ideologies of individualism, and responded to cultural and economic issues of the immigrations from Eastern and Southern Europe. (p. 2)

It is analyses of this sort, applied to S/FL contexts, that are needed to supplement the largely technical problems about which I have written so far. This line of analysis is grounded in critical social theory, concerning the social structures and processes that surround and construct teaching in general and S/FL instruction specifically and in the analyses that are made, in a critical vein, of classrooms and curricula. The former analyses have been associated in educational theory with Giroux (e.g., 1981), McLaren (e.g., 1989), and colleagues, the latter with Freire (1971) and Shor (1990); behind them stands the critical theory tradition of Habermas (1968) and Gramsci (1971), among others (cf. Sirotnik & Oakes, 1986). Of all these analyses, those associated with Freire have most often been applied to FL education, following the early work of Crawford-Lange (1981) and Crawford (1978) (cf. Faltis, 1990; Graman, 1988) and



to ESL (Auerbach, 1991; Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987; Nash, Cason, Rhum, McGrail, & Gomez-Sanford, 1992; Wallerstein, 1983). Discussion in the broader social theory style has appeared in applied linguistics aimed more often at ESL (Pennycook, 1990; Phillipson, e.g., 1988).

For these writers, the matter of how teachers teach, and why, would be addressed in terms of the teacher's socialization into teaching and the nature of knowledge. Freire's well-known term "banking education" summarizes the kind of teaching that is still most common in the U.S., if not the world: It implies an all-knowing teacher, a strongly hierarchical relationship between teacher and student, and a conception of knowledge as "out there," independent of social conditions and arising apparently independent of the power relations within society. Teachers are constructed into this model of teaching and knowing; they are unlikely to move out of it by themselves (unless, perhaps, there are wider social struggles in which they become engaged). I have already asserted that schools are not learning institutions and generally operate to transmit the social status quo. In the absence of a sufficient mass of like-minded individuals, schools are not usually sites where the values of experienced teachers could diverge from the status quo, and as for new teachers, there is evidence that schools resocialize them to fit the schools' own, usually more conservative views. Although in some cases, either individual teachers or teacher development groups can modify this situation, we must also look elsewhere. One obvious site for attempts to address these problems (besides society itself, which is not my charge here) is teacher education.

One area in which the dominance of technocratic rationality becomes manifest is in the training of prospective teachers. As Kliebard [1973], Zeichner [1983], and others . . . have pointed out, teacher education programs in the United States have long been dominated by their behavioristic orientation towards issues of mastery and methodological refinement as the basis for developing teacher competence. . . . Within this behavioristic model of education, teachers are viewed less as creative and imaginative thinkers who can transcend the ideology of methods and means in order to critically evaluate the purpose of educational discourse and practice than as obedient civil servants dutifully carrying out the dictates of others. All too often teacher-education programs lose sight of the need to educate students to be teacher-scholars by developing educational courses that focus on the immediacy of school problems and substitute the dis-

course of management and efficiency for a critical analysis of the underlying conditions that structure school life. (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, pp. 26-27)

Many institutional obstacles lie in the way of attempts to apply Aronowitz and Giroux's (1985) analysis to improve S/FL teacher education programs. Furthermore, due to the hegemonic power of the dominant culture in most countries, this sort of analysis is also problematic for some student teachers, who may find the critical position difficult to adopt (Willett & Jeannot, 1993). However, if they do not, then in these times of declining enrollments and reduced educational budgets, FL teachers may not be prepared for the ultimately political struggles in which they will need to engage if they are to obtain jobs and maintain programs.<sup>5</sup> ESL teachers in the U.S. and other English-speaking countries are already marginalized (Auerbach, 1991), particularly because their constituency, their students, and the parents of their students do not come from the mainstream culture. However, neither group is prepared by their teacher education programs to be organizers or to see themselves as "language activists." Referring to the U.S., García (1992) remarks, "internationally, our position must be founded in the realization that our difficulties as foreign language educators lie in teaching non-official languages (viewed as unimportant) in a *de facto* officially monolingual English-speaking context" (p. 19), and, one must add, in a context that, although English-speaking, is often reluctant to support even the teaching of that language to those who do not already command it. In this line of critique, Shor, (1990) remarks, "Future teachers should work in an actual change agency project as part of their program . . . Teacher training now disorients and disarms future teachers because it does not prepare them to defend themselves and their students politically" (p. 349).

This sort of analysis also applies to the "what" as well as to the "how" of S/FL teaching. At present, S/FL teacher education rarely makes clear that because S/FL instruction is a cross-cultural enterprise with strong political connections, the S/FLs taught, and even how they are taught, are likely to be reflections of international power and that, in many instances, S/FL teaching is a direct instrument of colonialism (Phillipson, 1988; Tollefson, 1989, 1995; Pennycook, 1990; cf. Tedick & Walker, 1994a). One issue that cuts across teaching contexts is the "trivialization of content," which Pennycook (1990) finds in S/FL instruction. He sees this

issue as stemming from the growth of communicative (ESL) language teaching, with its emphasis on interactive activities and games; thus, the content of an FL lesson or text (Kramsch, 1988) rarely addresses social issues, but rather deals in stereotypical families, cultures that are apparently homogenous, and topics that are uniformly nonprovocative. Pennycook remarks, "If we teach for communicative competence without exploring both how language use has been historically constructed around questions of power and dominance as well as how in everyday usage it is also always involved in questions of power, we will once again be developing a teaching practice that has more to do with assimilation than empowerment" (p. 14). At the level of text, Kramsch (1988) is quite explicit:

In a country with no central federal board of education and where the sixteen hundred school boards represent not the educational establishment but the local elites, textbooks insure the controlled acquisition of a selected body of knowledge that both preserves and reinforces the cultural and social status quo . . . They serve the needs of a variety of interest groups in the national economy: corporate and technocratic representatives, professional educators and administrators [but also] . . . fundamentalists . . . etc. (p. 68)

Although, as Kramsch points out, an FL text is itself a cultural construct reflecting aspects of the country in which it is to be used almost more than the culture of the language it is to teach, such texts are unlikely to provide "the skills necessary to analyze critically the American culture in the English texts and the foreign culture in the foreign language texts" (p. 68). Kramsch's analysis suggests that the absence of a critical approach to culture makes it difficult for teachers, given their limitations discussed earlier, to teach FL in a way that is critical and to teach FL cultures in their own contexts rather than as American (i.e., dominant culture) interpretations of the foreign culture. That this analysis applies more broadly is indicated by the fact that the same position is supported for EFL in Brazil by Busnardo and Braga (1987; for Hong Kong, cf. Brock, 1993), who draw on Freirean analyses to emphasize the importance of teachers demythologizing the culture of the FL when engaged in teaching dominant foreign languages.<sup>6</sup>

## SUMMARY

I have argued that how S/FL teachers teach and how S/FL teaching is constructed can be

seen at two major levels. At a technical level, teachers are not given the tools to do the job even when the job of S/FL teaching is depicted at a level of nonprovocative liberal discourse: to educate children and adults in second and foreign languages. Even on their own terms of technical rationality, the managerial systems present do not allow professionals to function professionally, and systems that obviously should be designed to be adaptive and capable of adjusting to new situations and demands are not in place. Much teaching remains at the level of coping; most schools are hard pressed to adapt, swiftly or at all, to new demands. Having sketched the inadequacies of teaching (for which I am not in any way blaming teachers), I then addressed my responsibility to provide some answers to my own criticisms. At a technical level of analysis, I do believe that it is possible to make schools more like "learning institutions" and less like the static, time-defying forms that they sometimes seem to be. The incorporation of ongoing self-study or internal evaluation components and the support of teacher action research as part of a required and supported program of professional development, possibly associated with accreditation exercises, would be the main innovations I would advocate. Of course, these are already in place in some sites.

However, I have also argued that at a critical level of analysis, how teachers teach is constructed socially: Thus, the role of schools, whether free-standing language teaching institutions, elite boarding schools, or state schools, in society's self-reproduction, must be considered when asking how S/FL teaching comes to be "constructed" as it has been. In addition, the roles of non-English languages in the U.S. and English in many other countries of the world must be assessed. Languages and language teaching are political, and language teachers are political actors (or instruments) whether they like it or not. If how S/FL teachers teach, or how S/FL teaching is constructed, is seen as inadequate in some way, we are unlikely to rectify the situation without an analysis that takes into account political factors: We must begin by looking to the political status of the language(s) under consideration and continue, inevitably, by considering the necessity of political action. This consideration must address, and preferably alter, the question of whether S/FL teaching is to be constructed at the expense of teachers or whether, rather, we S/FL teachers should not indeed ourselves be the people to engage in this

construction and create a construction of which we can be proud.

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The difficulty with this distinction is made clear by Berns (1990); it also is problematic when writing for an audience that is international. I will also use the term "applied linguistics"—an equally problematic usage—to refer to "the field."

<sup>2</sup> I recognize that there are cases where state or national curricula or assessment procedures can assist in a move towards improvement; for the U.S. FL context, several state-level initiatives are discussed by LaBouve (1993). Such initiatives can also, unfortunately, be rendered useless if they are not funded or supported at the school level or if they are imposed on teachers without consultation, inservicing, or the kind of long-term administrative support I discuss elsewhere in the article.

<sup>3</sup> Though not labelled as such, this model is implied as an essential part of the training of future FL teachers in Nerenz's (1993) predictions.

<sup>4</sup> Students learn similarly. That is to say, a critical approach denies that school failure is primarily the result of deficits in ability (*contra* Jensen, e.g., 1969) or environment (*contra* Bernstein, e.g., 1972).

<sup>5</sup> Political struggles have, of course, been an important part of the history (and successes) of both bilingual education and FL education (Darcey, 1987).

<sup>6</sup> The counterside to this analysis is to be found in Holliday's (1994) analysis of how EFL instruction promoted by British and American "experts" has consistently tried to inculcate forms of teaching that are alien to the host countries.

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## MLA Offers Enrollment Figures in Foreign Languages

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THE 1995 SURVEY OF FALL REGISTRATION IN POSTSECONDARY FOREIGN LANGUAGE courses is the 18th survey compiled by the Modern Language Association since 1958 with the support of grants from the U. S. Office of Education or its successor, the U.S. Department of Education. Responses were collected with the aid of a questionnaire sent to the registrars of 2,772 two- and four-year institutions. All but 65 of the institutions responded, yielding a response rate of 97.7%.

Language	1968	1980	1986	1990	1995
Arabic	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4
Chinese	0.4	1.2	1.7	1.6	2.3
French	34.4	26.9	27.4	23.0	18.0
German	19.2	13.7	12.1	11.3	8.5
Ancient Greek	1.7	2.4	1.8	1.4	1.4
Hebrew	0.9	2.1	1.6	1.1	1.2
Italian	2.7	3.8	4.1	4.2	3.8
Japanese	0.4	1.2	2.3	3.9	3.9
Latin	3.1	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.3
Portuguese	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6
Russian	3.6	2.6	3.4	3.8	2.2
Spanish	32.4	41.0	41.0	45.1	53.2
Other	0.7	1.5	1.4	1.5	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
(Total registrations)	(1,127,363)	(924,837)	(1,003,234)	(1,184,100)	(1,138,772)

[For more discussion, see the ACTFL Newsletter, Fall 1996, IX, 1, pp. 10–12, from which this information is summarized.]

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